

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A retrieving device connected with N other retrieving devices to form a retrieving system, said retrieving device comprising:

    retrieving means for retrieving a memory part corresponding to retrieval data from memory parts possessed by the retrieving means itself;

    first output control means for controlling output of an initial signal to said other retrieving devices;

    second output control means for controlling output of a retrieval result signal indicating whether or not a memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved by said retrieving means to said other retrieving devices;

    N first input means connected to said other retrieving devices, for inputting said retrieval result signals or initial signals from said other retrieving devices;

    second input means for inputting a reference signal;

    obtaining means for obtaining a priority signal in which said initial signals and said reference signal are disposed according to a predetermined priority;

    detecting means for detecting said first input

means that input said initial signal of higher priority than the priority corresponding to said reference signal, on the basis of said priority signal;

output means for detecting a predetermined memory part from said memory part retrieved by said retrieving means and outputting the predetermined memory part as a retrieval result of said retrieving system as a whole according to a content of said retrieval result signal inputted by said first input means detected by said detecting means; and

performing means for determining that no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices on the basis of said retrieval result signals inputted by said first input means, and performing predetermined processing when no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices.

2. A retrieving method for a retrieving device, said retrieving device being connected with N other retrieving devices to form a retrieving system, and including: retrieving means for retrieving a memory part corresponding to retrieval data from memory parts possessed by the retrieving means itself; first output control means for controlling output of an initial signal

to said other retrieving devices; second output control means for controlling output of a retrieval result signal indicating whether or not a memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved by said retrieving means to said other retrieving devices; N first input means connected to said other retrieving devices, for inputting said retrieval result signals or initial signals from said other retrieving devices; and second input means for inputting a reference signal, said retrieving method comprising:

an obtaining step for obtaining a priority signal in which said initial signals and said reference signal are disposed according to a predetermined priority;

a detecting step for detecting said first input means that input said initial signal of higher priority than the priority corresponding to said reference signal, on the basis of said priority signal;

an output step for detecting a predetermined memory part from said memory part retrieved by processing of said retrieving step and outputting the predetermined memory part as a retrieval result of said retrieving system as a whole according to a content of said retrieval result signal inputted by said first input means detected by processing of said detecting step; and

a performing step for determining that no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices on the basis of said retrieval result signals inputted by said first input means, and performing predetermined processing when no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices.

3. A recording medium on which a computer readable program for a retrieving device is recorded, said retrieving device being connected with  $N$  other retrieving devices to form a retrieving system, and including: retrieving means for retrieving a memory part corresponding to retrieval data from memory parts possessed by the retrieving means itself; first output control means for controlling output of an initial signal to said other retrieving devices; second output control means for controlling output of a retrieval result signal indicating whether or not a memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved by said retrieving means to said other retrieving devices;  $N$  first input means connected to said other retrieving devices, for inputting said retrieval result signals or initial signals from said other retrieving devices; and second input means for inputting a reference signal, said program comprising:

an obtaining step for obtaining a priority signal in which said initial signals and said reference signal are disposed according to a predetermined priority;

a detecting step for detecting said first input means that input said initial signal of higher priority than the priority corresponding to said reference signal, on the basis of said priority signal;

an output step for detecting a predetermined memory part from said memory part retrieved by processing of said retrieving step and outputting the predetermined memory part as a retrieval result of said retrieving system as a whole according to a content of said retrieving result signal inputted by said first input means detected by processing of said detecting step; and

a performing step for determining that no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices on the basis of said retrieval result signals inputted by said first input means, and performing predetermined processing when no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices.

4. A program for a retrieving device, said retrieving device being connected with N other retrieving devices to form a retrieving system, and including:

retrieving means for retrieving a memory part corresponding to retrieval data from memory parts possessed by the retrieving means itself; first output control means for controlling output of an initial signal to said other retrieving devices; second output control means for controlling output of a retrieval result signal indicating whether or not a memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved by said retrieving means to said other retrieving devices; N first input means connected to said other retrieving devices, for inputting said retrieval result signals or initial signals from said other retrieving devices; and second input means for inputting a reference signal, said program making a computer perform processing comprising:

an obtaining step for obtaining a priority signal in which said initial signals and said reference signal are disposed according to a predetermined priority;

a detecting step for detecting said first input means that input said initial signal of higher priority than the priority corresponding to said reference signal, on the basis of said priority signal;

an output step for detecting a predetermined memory part from said memory part retrieved by processing of said retrieving step and outputting the predetermined

memory part as a retrieval result of said retrieving system as a whole according to a content of said retrieval result signal inputted by said first input means detected by processing of said detecting step; and

a performing step for determining that no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices on the basis of said retrieval result signals inputted by said first input means, and performing predetermined processing when no memory part corresponding to said retrieval data is retrieved in all said other retrieving devices.